

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

To:

United States Patent and Trademark
Office
(Box PCT)
Crystal Plaza 2
Washington, DC 20231
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE

in its capacity as elected Office

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of mailing (day/month/year) 17 February 1999 (17.02.99) | |
| International application No. PCT/AU98/00525 | Applicant's or agent's file reference 80563 |
| International filing date (day/month/year) 08 July 1998 (08.07.98) | Priority date (day/month/year) 08 July 1997 (08.07.97) |
| Applicant OLIVE, Scott | |

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

☒ in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:08 February 1999 (08.02.99)☐ in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:2. The election ☒ was☐ was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

| | |
|---|--|
| The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35 | Authorized officer Nicola Wolff Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38 |
|---|--|

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING
OF A CHANGE(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and
Administrative Instructions, Section 422)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

F.B. RICE & CO.
605 Darling Street
Balmain, NSW 2041
AUSTRALIE

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of mailing (day/month/year) 17 February 1999 (17.02.99) | IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION |
| Applicant's or agent's file reference 80563 | |
| International application No. PCT/AU98/00525 | International filing date (day/month/year) 08 July 1998 (08.07.98) |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. The following indications appeared on record concerning: | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the applicant | <input type="checkbox"/> the inventor | <input type="checkbox"/> the agent <input type="checkbox"/> the common representative |
| Name and Address ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY. LTD. 85-113 Dunning Avenue Rosebery, NSW 2018 Australia | State of Nationality AU | State of Residence AU |
| | Telephone No. | |
| | Facsimile No. | |
| | Teleprinter No. | |
| 2. The International Bureau hereby notifies the applicant that the following change has been recorded concerning: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the person | <input type="checkbox"/> the name | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the address <input type="checkbox"/> the nationality <input type="checkbox"/> the residence |
| Name and Address ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY. LTD. 71 Longueville Road Lane Cove, NSW 2066 Australia | State of Nationality AU | State of Residence AU |
| | Telephone No. | |
| | Facsimile No. | |
| | Teleprinter No. | |
| 3. Further observations, if necessary: | | |
| 4. A copy of this notification has been sent to: | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the receiving Office | <input type="checkbox"/> the designated Offices concerned | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the International Searching Authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the elected Offices concerned | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the International Preliminary Examining Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> other: | |

| | |
|---|--|
| The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland | Authorized officer Nicola Wolff |
| Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35 | Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38 |

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER | | |
| Int Cl ⁶ : G07F 17/34 | | |
| According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC | | |
| B. FIELDS SEARCHED | | |
| Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC G07F 17/34 | | |
| Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched AU: IPC as above | | |
| Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) WPAT/JAPIO: Trigger, touch off, set off, prize, award, payment, jackpot, payout, start. | | |
| C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT | | |
| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
| A | GB, 2153572 A (Arthur Edward Thomas Limited (United Kingdom)) 21 August 1985 | |
| A | AU, 53370/86 (589158) B (FRANKOVIC et al) 14 August 1986 | |
| A | AU, 33868/89 (628330) B (KABUSHIKI KAISA UNIVERSAL) 16 November 1989 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex | | |
| <p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" Document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> | | |
| Date of the actual completion of the international search 30 July 1998 | | Date of mailing of the international search report 11 AUG 1998 |
| Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200 WODEN ACT 2606 AUSTRALIA Facsimile No.: (02) 6285 3929 | | Authorized officer M.E. DIXON Telephone No.: (02) 6283 2194 |

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992) copy

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International Application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent document cited

WRITTEN OPINION

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----|
| Novelty (N) | Claims 1-98 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |
| Inventive step (IS) | Claims 1-98 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Claims 1-98 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |

2. Citations and explanations

None of the cited art discloses a gaming console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved the particular trigger conditions as defined in the claims.

Therefore the requirements of Article 33 are satisfied.

Form PCT/TPEA/408 (Box V) (July 1998) copjhw

WRITTEN OPINION

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the claims, of the claims, description, and drawings are on the question whether the claims are fully

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

CO E/M.

From the:
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To:

F B Rice & Co
605 Darling Street
BALMAIN NSW 2041

RECEIVED

- 3 MAR 1999

F. B. RICE & CO.

PCT

WRITTEN OPINION

(PCT Rule 66)

Date of mailing
(day/month/year) - 2 MAR 1999

Applicant's or agent's file reference
80563

REPLY DUE within TWO MONTHS
from the above date of mailing

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

International filing date (day/month/year)

8 July 1998

Priority Date (day/month/year)

8 July 1997

International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC

Int. CL⁶ G07F 17/34

Applicant

ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD (et al)

1. This written opinion is the first (first, etc) drawn by this International Preliminary Examining Authority.

2. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|--|
| I | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Basis of the opinion |
| II | <input type="checkbox"/> | Priority |
| III | <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability |
| IV | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of unity of invention |
| V | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability, citations and explanations supporting such statement |
| VI | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain documents cited |
| VII | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain defects in the international application |
| VIII | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Certain observations on the international application |

3. The applicant is hereby invited to reply to this opinion.

When? See the time limit indicated above. The applicant may, before the expiration of that time limit, request this Authority to grant an extension, see Rule 66.2(d).

How? By submitting a written reply, accompanied, where appropriate, by amendments, according to Rule 66.3. For the form and the language of the amendments, see Rules 66.8 and 66.9.

Also For an additional opportunity to submit amendments, see Rule 66.4.
For the examiner's obligation to consider amendments and/or arguments, see Rule 66.4bis.
For an informal communication with the examiner, see Rule 66.6.

If no reply is filed, the international preliminary examination report will be established on the basis of this opinion.

4. The final date by which the international preliminary examination report must be established according to Rule 69.2 is: 8 November 1999

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU
AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE
PO BOX 200
WODEN ACT 2606
AUSTRALIA
Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929

Authorized Officer

M.E. DIXON

Telephone No. (02) 6283 2194

WF TEN OPINION

international application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

I. Basis of the opinion

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description, pages 1-4, 6-11, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 5, filed with the letter of 4 May 1999
- ☒ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended under Article 19;
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 12-23, filed with the letter of 4 May 1999
- ☒ the drawings, pages 1/3-3/3, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , filed with the letter of .
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , filed with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the written opinion was drawn on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in printed form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages
- ☐ the claims, Nos.
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig

5. ☐ This opinion has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this opinion as "originally filed"

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

RECEIVED

- 8 JUL 1999

F. B. RICE & CO.

From the:
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
REPORT

(PCT Rule 71.1)

To:
F B Rice & Co
605 Darling Street
BALMAIN NSW 2041

Date of mailing
day/month/year

7 JUL 99

Applicant's or agent's file reference
80563

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No.
PCT/AU 98/00525

International filing date
8 July 1998

Priority date
8 July 1997

Applicant
ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD (et al)

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translations to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices)(Article 39(1))(see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU
AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE
PO BOX 200
WODEN ACT 2606
AUSTRALIA
Facsimile No.: (02) 6285 3929

Authorized officer

M.E. DIXON

Telephone No. (02) 6283 2194

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY
PCT
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Applicant's or agent's file reference 80563 | FOR FURTHER ACTION | See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416). |
| International application No. PCT/AU 98/00525 | International filing date (day/month/year) 8 July 1998 | Priority Date (day/month/year) 8 July 1997 |
| International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC Int. Cl. ⁶ G07F 17/34 | | |
| Applicant ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD (et al) | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|--------------------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|--|----|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|----|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------|--|------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. | This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. | This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT). These annexes consist of a total of 15 sheet(s). | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. | This report contains indications relating to the following items: <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">I</td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Basis of the report</td> </tr> <tr> <td>II</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Priority</td> </tr> <tr> <td>III</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IV</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Lack of unity of invention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>V</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VI</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Certain documents cited</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VII</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Certain defects in the international application</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIII</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Certain observations on the international application</td> </tr> </table> | I | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Basis of the report | II | <input type="checkbox"/> | Priority | III | <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability | IV | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of unity of invention | V | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement | VI | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain documents cited | VII | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain defects in the international application | VIII | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain observations on the international application |
| I | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Basis of the report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| II | <input type="checkbox"/> | Priority | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| III | <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IV | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of unity of invention | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| V | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VI | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain documents cited | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VII | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain defects in the international application | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VIII | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certain observations on the international application | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Date of submission of the demand 8 February 1999 | Date of completion of the report 24 June 1999 |
| Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200 WODEN ACT 2606 AUSTRALIA Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929 | Authorized Officer M.E. DIXON Telephone No. (02) 6283 2194 |

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

I Basis of the report**1. With regard to the elements of the international application:***

- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description, pages 1, 2, 4, 6-11, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 3, 3/1, 5, filed with the letter of 15 June 1999.
- ☒ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 13-20, 22, 23, filed with the letter of 4 May 1999
pages 12, 21 filed with the letter of 15 June 1999
- ☒ the drawings, pages 1/3-3/3, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , filed with the letter of .
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , filed with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, was on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages
- ☐ the claims, Nos.
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report

INTERNATIONAL PRIMAARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----|
| Novelty (N) | Claims 1-98 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |
| Inventive step (IS) | Claims 1-98 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Claims 1-98 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

The invention relates to a random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined either by an event having a probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console or by an event having a probability related to the credits bet per game on the console.

None of the cited art discloses such a feature nor a gaming console including such a feature.

Therefore the claims meet the requirements of Article 33(2)-(4)

PCT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING
OF A CHANGE(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and
Administrative Instructions, Section 422)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

F.B. RICE & CO.
605 Darling Street
Balmain, NSW 2041
AUSTRALIE

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of mailing (day/month/year) 17 February 1999 (17.02.99) | IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION |
| Applicant's or agent's file reference 80563 | |
| International application No. PCT/AU98/00525 | International filing date (day/month/year) 08 July 1998 (08.07.98) |

1. The following indications appeared on record concerning:

☒ the applicant

 ☐ the inventor

 ☐ the agent

 ☐ the common representative

Name and Address

ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY.
LTD.
85-113 Dunning Avenue
Rosebery, NSW 2018
Australia

State of Nationality

AU

State of Residence

AU

Telephone No.

Facsimile No.

Teleprinter No.

2. The International Bureau hereby notifies the applicant that the following change has been recorded concerning:

☐ the person

 ☐ the name

 ☒ the address

 ☐ the nationality

 ☐ the residence

Name and Address

ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY.
LTD.
71 Longueville Road
Lane Cove, NSW 2066
Australia

State of Nationality

AU

State of Residence

AU

Telephone No.

Facsimile No.

Teleprinter No.

3. Further observations, if necessary:

4. A copy of this notification has been sent to:

| | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the receiving Office | <input type="checkbox"/> the designated Offices concerned |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the International Searching Authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the elected Offices concerned |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the International Preliminary Examining Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

The International Bureau of WIPO
34, chemin des Colombettes
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Authorized officer

Nicola Wolff

Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35

Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38

WRITTEN OPINION

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

I Basis of the opinion

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

☒ the international application as originally filed.☐ the description, pages , as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , filed with the letter of .☐ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , filed with the letter of .☐ the drawings, pages , as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , filed with the letter of .☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , filed with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the written opinion was drawn on the basis of the sequence listing:

☐ contained in the international application in printed form.☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:☐ the description, pages☐ the claims, Nos.☐ the drawings, sheets/fig5. ☐ This opinion has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this opinion as "originally filed"

WRITTEN OPINION

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00525

V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----|
| Novelty (N) | Claims 1-80 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |
| Inventive step (IS) | Claims 1-80 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Claims 1-80 | YES |
| | Claims | NO |

2. Citations and explanations

None of the cited art discloses a gaming console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved the particular trigger conditions as defined in the claim.

Therefore the requirements of Article 33 are satisfied.

WRITTEN OPINION

International application No.

PC /AU 98/00525

VIII Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

1. Claim 1 lacks clarity and its precise scope is uncertain. It defines "A ... system associated with a ... console" (line 1). The rest of the claim defines features of the console but nowhere does it define any features of the system itself. The system of the claim may or may not have any relationship to the feature outcome or to the trigger means and conditions defined for the console. There may be an implied relationship expressed through the loose term "associated with" but that is by no means certain.

A similar observation applies to claim 23.

2. Claim 43 lacks clarity insofar as it cannot be determined if there is any relationship between the random prize awarding feature (line 1) and the features of the console as defined in the rest of the claim. There is no defined or implied link between the random prize awarding feature and the remaining features of the claim.

A similar observation applies to claim 61 insofar as it is not clear if the random prize is awarded by way of the feature outcome or by some other unspecified game outcome.

3. Claim 17 line 2 "6 or 16" is not supported by the description.
4. Claims 44 and 50-52 are not clear as directed to "the system".
5. Claims 62 and 68-70 are not clear as directed to "the system".
6. With reference to observations 4 and 5, there is no clear antecedent for "the system" in claim 78.

The demand must be filed directly with the one chosen by the applicant. The competent International Preliminary Examining Authority, if two or more Authorities are competent, the full name or two-letter code of that Authority may be indicated by the applicant in the line below:

IPEA/

PCT

CHAPTER II

DEMAND

under Article 31 of the Patent Cooperation Treaty:

The undersigned requests that the international application specified below be the subject of international preliminary examination according to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and hereby elects all eligible States (except where otherwise indicated).

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Identification of IPEA | | Date of receipt of DEMAND |
| Box No. I IDENTIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION | | Applicant's or agent's file reference 80563 |
| International application No. PCT/AU98/00525 | International filing date (day/month/year) (8.7.98) eighth July 1998 | (Earliest) Priority date (day/month/year) (8.7.97) eighth July 1997 |
| Title of invention SLOT MACHINE GAME AND SYSTEM WITH IMPROVED JACKPOT FEATURE | | |
| Box No. II APPLICANT(S) | | |
| Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.) Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd 71 Longueville Road Lane Cove 2066 New South Wales, Australia | | Telephone No. Facsimile No. Teleprinter No. |
| State (that is, country) of nationality: AU | | State (that is, country) of residence: AU |
| Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.) Olive, Scott 1/130 Wanganella Street Balgowlah 2095 New South Wales, Australia | | |
| State (that is, country) of nationality: AU | | State (that is, country) of residence: AU |
| Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.) | | |
| State (that is, country) of nationality: | | State (that is, country) of residence: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Further applicants are indicated on a continuation sheet. | | |

Sheet No. 2

International application No.

PCT/AU98/00525

Box No. III AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE; OR ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

The following person is ☒ agent ☐ common representative
 and ☒ has been appointed earlier and represents the applicant(s) also for international preliminary examination.

☐ is hereby appointed and any earlier appointment of (an) agent(s)/common representative is hereby revoked.

☐ is hereby appointed, specifically for the procedure before the International Preliminary Examining Authority, in addition to the agent(s)/common representative appointed earlier.

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation.
 The address must include postal code and name of country.)

F B RICE & CO
 605 Darling Street
 BALMAIN NSW 2041
 AUSTRALIA

Telephone No

(612) 9810 7133

Facsimile No.

(612) 9810 8200

Teleprinter No.

☐ Address for correspondence: Mark this check-box where no agent or common representative is/has been appointed and the space above is used instead to indicate a special address to which correspondence should be sent.

Box No. IV BASIS FOR INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**Statement concerning amendments:**

1. The applicant wishes the international preliminary examination to start on the basis of:

☒ the international application as originally filed

the description ☐ as originally filed
☐ as amended under Article 34

the claims ☐ as originally filed
☐ as amended under Article 19 (together with any accompanying statement)
☐ as amended under Article 34

the drawings ☐ as originally filed
☐ as amended under Article 34

2. ☐ The applicant wishes any amendment to the claims under Article 19 to be considered as reversed.

3. ☐ The applicant wishes the start of the international preliminary examination to be postponed until the expiration of 20 months from the priority date unless the International Preliminary Examining Authority receives a copy of any amendments made under Article 19 or a notice from the applicant that he does not wish to make such amendments (Rule 69.1(d)). (This check-box may be marked only where the time limit under Article 19 has not yet expired.)

* Where no check-box is marked, international preliminary examination will start on the basis of the international application as originally filed or, where a copy of amendments to the claims under Article 19 and/or amendments of the international application under Article 34 are received by the International Preliminary Examining Authority before it has begun to draw up a written opinion or the international preliminary examination report, as so amended.

Language for the purposes of international preliminary examination: English

- ☐ which is the language in which the international application was filed.
☐ which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search.
☐ which is the language of publication of the international application.
☐ which is the language of the translation (to be) furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination.

Box No. V ELECTION OF STATES

The applicant hereby elects all eligible States (that is, all States which have been designated and which are bound by Chapter II of the PCT)

excluding the following States which the applicant wishes not to elect:

Sheet No. 3

International application No.

PCT/AU98/00525

Box No. VI CHECKLIST

The demand is accompanied by the following elements, in the language referred to in Box No. IV, for the purposes of international preliminary examination:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1. translation of international application | : | sheets |
| 2. amendments under Article 34 | : | sheets |
| 3. copy of (or, where required, translation) of amendments under Article 19 | : | sheets |
| 4. copy of (or, where required, translation) of statement under Article 19 | : | sheets |
| 5. letter | : | sheets |
| 6. other (<i>specify</i>) | : | sheets |

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only

| | |
|----------|--------------|
| received | not received |
|----------|--------------|

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The demand is also accompanied by the item(s) marked below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fee calculation sheet | 4. <input type="checkbox"/> statement explaining lack of signature |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> separate signed power of attorney | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> nucleotide and or amino acid sequence listing in computer readable form |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> copy of general power of attorney, reference number, if any | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> other (<i>specify</i>) |

Box No. VII SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE

Next to each signature, indicate the name of the person signing and the capacity in which the person signs (if such capacity is not obvious from reading the demand).


CHRIS OWENS

for and on behalf of F B Rice & Co

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only

1. Date of actual receipt of DEMAND:

2. Adjusted date of receipt of demand due to CORRECTIONS under Rule 60.1(b):

3. ☐ The date of receipt of the demand is AFTER the expiration of 19 months from the priority date and item 4 or 5, below, does not apply.☐ The applicant has been informed accordingly.4. ☐ The date of receipt of the demand is WITHIN the period of 19 months from the priority date as extended by virtue of Rule 30.55. ☐ Although the date of receipt of the demand is after the expiration of 19 months from the priority date, the delay in arrival is EXCUSED pursuant to Rule 32.

For International Bureau use only

Demand received from IPEA on:

Form PCT/IPEA/401 (last sheet)(July 1998)

See Notes to the demand form

PCT

CHAPTER II

FEE CALCULATION SHEET

Annex to the Demand for international preliminary examination

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only

| | |
|---|---|
| International application No. PCT/AU98/00525 | Date stamp of the IPEA |
| Applicant's or agent's file reference 80563 | |
| Applicant <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD</div> | |
| Calculation of prescribed fees | |
| 1. Preliminary examination fee | 450.00 P |
| 2. Handling fee (<i>Applicants from certain States are entitled to a reduction of 75% of the handling fee. Where the applicant is (or all applicants are) so entitled, the amount to be entered at H is 25% of the handling fee.</i>) | 260.00 H |
| 3. Total of prescribed fees Add the amounts entered at P and H and enter total in the TOTAL box | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">710.00</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">TOTAL</div> |
| MODE OF PAYMENT | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> authorization to charge deposit account with the IPEA (see below) | <input type="checkbox"/> cash |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cheque | <input type="checkbox"/> revenue stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> postal money order | <input type="checkbox"/> coupons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bank draft | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify): |
| Deposit Account Authorization (<i>this mode of payment may not be available at all IPEAs</i>) | |
| The IPEA/ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> is hereby authorized to charge the total fees indicated above to my deposit account. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (<i>this check-box may be marked only if the conditions for deposit accounts of the IPEA so permit</i>) is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the total fees indicated above to my deposit account. | |
| Deposit Account Number _____ | Date (day/month/year) _____ |
| Signature _____ | |

*Slot machine game and system with improved jackpot
feature*

Introduction

5 The present invention relates to apparatus for use with a system of linked poker machines and in particular the apparatus provides an improved jackpot mechanism for use with such a poker machine system.

Background of the Invention

10 Many schemes have been devised in the past to induce players to play slot machines including schemes such as specifying periods during which jackpot prizes are increased or bonus jackpots paid. Other schemes involve awarding an additional prize to a first player to achieve a predetermined combination on a poker machine. These methods, while effective, add to club overheads because of the need for additional staff to ensure that the scheme is operated smoothly.

15 More recently, with the advent of poker machines linked through electrical networks it has been possible to automatically generate jackpot prizes on the basis of information received from the machines being played which are connected to the system and one such prior art arrangement, commonly known as "Cashcade™", counts turnover on all machines in the
20 network, increments a prize value in accordance with the turnover and pays the jackpot prize when the count reaches some predetermined and randomly selected number. In a more recent prior art arrangement, each game played on each machine in a gaming system is allocated a randomly selected number and the prize is awarded to a machine when the game number it is
25 allocated matches a preselected random number.

In another recent prior art arrangement, the winning machine is selected by randomly selecting a number at a point in time and decrementing the number as games played on the system are counted until the number is decremented to zero at which time the game (or associated machine) causing
30 the final decrement is awarded the jackpot.

With some prior art combination based trigger arrangements there is a serious disadvantage in that the player betting a single token per line, is just as likely to achieve a jackpot as the player playing multiple tokens per line. This has the effect of encouraging players playing for the bonus jackpot to bet
35 in single tokens, rather than betting multiple tokens per game.

Jackpot games have traditionally been popular in Casinos. However, in their conventional format these games have inherent limitations:

(i) Games which use specific combinations of symbols to trigger jackpots are perceived by many players as being unwinnable. The games are typically designed in such a way that the big jackpots should not be won until large amounts are accumulated. With such low frequency the jackpots are never seen to be won by most players. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many players have learnt to disregard the chance of winning the major jackpots and are realistically playing for the lesser jackpots (ie the minor and mini jackpots). The increasing popularity of small mystery jackpots with higher frequencies of occurrence tends to support this argument;

(ii) Due to the increasing demand of players for a more complex and diverse game range, conventional jackpot games with combination triggers have become superseded. However, it is extremely complex to develop a wide variety of combinations which support both a feature game and mathematically exact jackpot triggers;

(iii) Typically, it would be expected that the game return (RTP) is independent of the number of coins bet per line. With conventional progressive jackpot games though, increasing the credits bet per line creates a relative disadvantage as far as RTP is concerned. Lets say the start-up amount for a feature jackpot is \$10000. A player who is playing 1 credit per line has a chance for \$10000 for each credit played, whereas a player playing 5 credits per line only has a chance for \$2000 for each credit played. This creates a scale of diminishing returns. The smart player who gambles for the feature jackpot only, will always cover all playlines, but will only bet 1 credit per line because the prize paid for the feature jackpot is the same irrespective of the bet. This is supported by data collected from casinos,

(iv) Typical combination triggered progressive jackpots have fixed hit rates which removes from the operator's control the ability to vary jackpot frequency.

These arrangements have been in use in the State of New South Wales and in other jurisdictions for a considerable period of time, however, as with other aspects of slot machine games, players become bored with such arrangements and new and more innovative schemes become necessary in order to stimulate player interest.

In this specification, the term "combinations" will be used to refer to the mathematical definition of a particular game. That is to say, the combinations of a game are the probabilities of each possible outcome for that game.

5 **Summary of the Invention**

According to a first aspect the present invention provides a random prize awarding system associated with a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for a trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the console.

According to a second aspect, the present invention provides a random prize awarding system associated with a network of gaming consoles, the system being arranged to offer a feature outcome on a particular console when a trigger condition occurs as a result of a game being played on the respective console the prize awarding system including trigger means arranged to test for a trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome on the respective console when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the respective console.

According to a third aspect, the present invention provides a gaming console including a random prize awarding feature, the gaming console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the console.

According to a fourth aspect, the present invention provides a method of awarding a random prize associated with a gaming console arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the method including testing for a trigger condition and initiating the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the respective console.

Preferably, the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to expected turnover between consecutive occurrences of the trigger condition, on the respective console and the credits bet on the respective game.

5 In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each bought game, and for each credit bet on the respective game, allotting to the game, one or more numbers from the predetermined range of numbers, and in the event that one of the numbers
10 allotted to the player matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

 In one embodiment, one or more gaming consoles are connected in a gaming network, each of the consoles including signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the
15 respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot which is increased in response to signals from the consoles connected to the network.

 Preferably also, the console is arranged to play a first main game and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is a second feature
20 game.

 The function of triggering a feature jackpot game may either be performed by a central feature game controller or may be performed within each console in the system.

 In the preferred embodiment, the predetermined range of numbers is
25 determined as a function of expected turnover between consecutive occurrences of the trigger condition, expected jackpot amounts and jackpot frequencies and will equal the expected average turnover per machine between successive initiations of progressive jackpot games divided by the credit value for that machine. For example, if the progressive jackpot is to be
30 played for an average every \$5,000 of turnover played and the credit value on the machine is \$0.05, then the number range will be 1 to 100,000 (i.e. $5,000/0.05$). In the preferred embodiment, the gaming machine will allocate the lowest numbers in the range to the player such that if the player plays 20 credits he will be allocated numbers 1-20 giving him a 1 in 5,000 chance of
35 triggering a jackpot feature game.

Alternatively, the number range can be set to the average expected turnover between jackpot occurrences expressed in cents (500,000 in the above example), in which case the numbers allocated to the player, will be proportional to his total wager expressed in cents (i.e. 1-100 in the above example).

Preferably, the feature game is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the first game. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the second game is a spinning reel game having a reduced number of symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels a predetermined combination of symbols appears on the win line of each reel.

In one particular example, the second screen game is a five reel game with two different symbols on each reel. The symbols may be of equal value and equally weighted (i.e. same number of instances) on each reel or alternatively, the prizes might be of different values (eg: different fractions of the pool) and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

Preferably, the prize awarded in a jackpot game by the system of the present invention, is a monetary amount the value of which is incremented with each game played on each gaming machine or console in the system. Alternatively, the incrementation can take place on a per token bet basis.

Where used above, the term 'console' is used to indicate a gaming machine, a gaming terminal or other device arranged to be connected to a communications system and to provide a user gaming interface. In the following description, examples are give which are applicable to traditional slot machines, however the invention should be taken to include gaming systems which include user interfaces other than traditional slot machines.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Embodiments of the invention will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a network of electronic gaming machines to which a mystery jackpot controller according to the present invention is connected;

Figure 2 is a flow chart showing a game arrangement according to the invention; and

Figure 3 shows an example of a 5 reel by 3 row window display.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, a new jackpot trigger mechanism provides the Casino operator with a far higher degree of flexibility. Unlike conventional combination triggered jackpots, the jackpots here are won from a feature game. The feature game is triggered randomly as a function of credits bet per game. When a feature is triggered, a feature game appears. Each jackpot can only be won from this feature game. During the feature game a second set of reel strips appears and a "spin and hold" feature game commences. The feature prize score is calculated by the total of the points appearing on the centre line of all 5 reels.

Feature jackpots in this format exhibit significant differences over previous jackpot systems:

(i) A jackpot game is provided which is compatible with any existing game combination within an installation independent of the platform, denomination or type of game (eg. slot machines, cards, keno, bingo or pachinko). This will allow for the linking of combinations between game type, platform type and denomination. Using this system, jackpot games can now be developed using specific combinations for the base game which were previously unsuitable for Link Progressive Systems. These games will compete with the appeal of the latest games on the market.

(ii) There is no longer a need to develop mathematically exact combinations in the base game.

(iii) Unlike the multiplier game in combination triggered jackpot embodiments, the present invention provides a direct relationship between the number of credits bet and the probability of winning the jackpot feature game on any one bought game. Betting 10 credits per line will produce ten times as many hits into the feature game than betting 1 credit per line. This is achieved by using a jackpot trigger which is directly related to the wager bet on a respective game and the turnover, instead of using conventional combination triggers.

(iv) Jackpot hit rates can now be changed without making changes to the base game. This was previously not possible using combination triggered jackpots.

(v) The jackpot feature system can be used across a wide-area-network (WAN), local-area-network (LAN), used as a stand-alone game

independent of a network or used with a mystery jackpot. Flexibility is available to change combinations at will.

Referring to Figure 1 a plurality of electronic gaming consoles 10 are connected to a network 11, to which a feature jackpot controller 12 and display means 13 are also connected.

Each of the electronic gaming consoles 10 are provided with a network interface arranged to provide a signal onto the network 11 on each occurrence of an operation of a respective console and the jackpot controller 12 is arranged to receive each of the console operation signals and to increment the value of a random jackpot prize on the occurrence of each of these operation signals.

A flow chart for a prize awarding algorithm is illustrated in Figure 2.

Referring to the algorithm of Figure 2, machine contributions go into the prize pool as with known prior art jackpot systems, while the overhead display shows the incrementing prize value.

In the EGM, an average value of machine turnover between jackpot hits, is programmed and is used to randomly generate trigger data for the jackpot feature games. In step 20 of the algorithm of Figure 2, the actual number range and therefore probability of a feature jackpot game being awarded will depend upon the value of a credit in the particular machine and is calculated by dividing the turnover value by the value of a credit (eg., $\$5000/\$0.05 = 100.000$). The average turnover value is fixed for the EGMs and the random number generator is initialised (see step 20) at startup to generate numbers from the preprogrammed range determined from that value.

For every game that is played, a random trigger value is selected (see step 21) in the preprogrammed range as determined from the average turnover value. When the game is commenced, it is then reported (see step 22) to the controller, which allocates a contribution to the prize pool. Each game is also allotted (see step 23) numbers from the same number range that from which the random number was selected, one number in the range being allotted for each credit bet such that the player's probability of being awarded a jackpot feature game is proportional to the bet.

The previously selected random number is then used as a trigger value and compared with the values allotted to the player, if there is a match (see step 24) between the trigger value and the player values, the player is given

an opportunity to play a jackpot feature game (see step 25). Alternatively, at step 23, a number is allocated which is equal to, or proportional to the number of credits bet in the respective game and in step 24, the trigger value is compared with the single player value and a jackpot feature awarded if the trigger value is less than or equal to the player value. It will be appreciated that this alternative arrangement is mathematically equivalent to the previously described arrangement, the range of numbers below the allotted number in the alternative arrangement being equivalent to the set of allotted numbers in the previously described arrangement.

In the preferred embodiment, a prize is always awarded in the jackpot feature game, the feature game being used to determine the size of the prize to be awarded (see step 27). The winning machine is then locked up (see step 28) and the controller awaits an indication that the prize has been paid before allowing the machine to be unlocked (see step 29). In some embodiments, the machine will not be locked up in steps 28 and 19, but instead the prize will simply be paid and the program will return to step 21. The machine then returns to step (see step 21) and commences a new game. If the trigger value does not match (see step 27) then there is no feature game awarded for that bought game and the machine returns to step (see step 22) and waits for the next game to commence.

By way of example, a feature game might be triggered by an EGM every \$5000 of turnover played, which is equivalent to 100,000 credits on a \$0.05 machine. This is referred to as the jackpot feature game hit rate in credits. A random number is generated within a prescribed range of numbers at the EGM at the commencement of each bought game. The prescribed range of numbers is determined by the jackpot feature game hit rate which has been determined previously, from typical values of casino turnover, expected jackpot amounts and jackpot frequencies. The prescribed range in this example is therefore 1 to 100,000 and before the commencement of each bought game a random number is generated within this range.

A bet of 20 credits will result in the numbers between 1 and 20 (inclusive) being allotted to the game (note that statistically it does not matter if the numbers are randomly selected or not or allotted as a block or scattered, the probability of a feature game being awarded is unchanged). If the number 7 is produced by the random number generator, then the feature game will be triggered. If any number between 21 and 100,000 is produced

by the random number generator, the feature game will not be triggered. Similarly, a bet of 200 credits will result in the numbers between 1 and 200 (inclusive) being allotted to the game. If any number between 1 and 200 is produced by the random number generator, then the feature game will be triggered. If any number between 201 and 100,000 is produced by the random number generator, the feature game will not be triggered.

The example below has been developed using example turnover data. A trigger of the second screen feature game is expected every \$5000 of turnover (ie. 100000 credits on a \$0.05 machine). Increasing the number of credits bet increases the chance of triggering the feature on any bought game.

| Number of credits bet | Range numbers assigned | Games to hit | Bet/game | Turnover of EGM since last hit (\$) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 to 1 | 100000 | \$0.05 | \$5000 |
| 2 | 1 to 2 | 50000 | \$0.10 | \$5000 |
| 3 | 1 to 3 | 33333.33 | \$0.15 | \$5000 |
| 5 | 1 to 5 | 20000 | \$0.25 | \$5000 |
| 10 | 1 to 10 | 10000 | \$0.50 | \$5000 |
| 15 | 1 to 15 | 6666.66 | \$0.75 | \$5000 |
| 20 | 1 to 20 | 5000 | \$1.00 | \$5000 |
| 25 | 1 to 25 | 4000 | \$1.25 | \$5000 |
| 30 | 1 to 30 | 3333.33 | \$1.50 | \$5000 |
| 40 | 1 to 40 | 2500 | \$2.00 | \$5000 |
| 45 | 1 to 45 | 2222.22 | \$2.25 | \$5000 |
| 50 | 1 to 50 | 2000 | \$2.50 | \$5000 |
| 60 | 1 to 60 | 1666.66 | \$3.00 | \$5000 |
| 75 | 1 to 75 | 1333.33 | \$3.75 | \$5000 |
| 100 | 1 to 100 | 1000 | \$5.00 | \$5000 |
| 150 | 1 to 150 | 666.66 | \$7.50 | \$5000 |
| 200 | 1 to 200 | 500 | \$10.00 | \$5000 |

Preferably, when a jackpot feature game is triggered, all players are alerted by a jackpot bell that a possible grand jackpot is about to be played for. This is done so that all players share in the experience of a jackpot win. Anecdotal evidence of players watching feature games being played in

Australian casinos suggests that the drawing power of such games is immense.

Players are alerted by the jackpot bell instantaneously at any point during a game, but the feature game will not appear until the current game (including base game features) are completed.

In this embodiment the feature game appears with the new reel strips already spinning and accompanying feature game tunes playing. The player stops the reels spinning by pressing the corresponding playline buttons in order. The feature prize score is calculated by the total of the points appearing on the centre line of all 5 reels. Across the top of the screen, a sum of the scores is displayed.

The 4 feature prize meters in descending order of value are:

- (i) Grand Feature Prize. A score of ≥ 100 wins the grand feature jackpot;
- (ii) Major Feature Prize. A score of 90-99 (inclusive) wins the major feature jackpot;
- (iii) Minor Feature Prize. A score of 80-89 (inclusive) wins the minor feature jackpot;
- (iv) Mini Feature Prize. A score of ≤ 79 wins the mini feature jackpot.

By way of example, referring to Figure 3, a 5 reel by 3 row window is displayed. If the reels of the feature game stop on the numbers shown in Figure 3, then the progressive jackpot won is the sum of the numbers on the centre line ie. $12 + 10 + 18 + 13 + 22 = 75$ which is within the range for the mini feature jackpot.

The instant the feature game is completed and the sum of scores from all 5 reels is shown, the feature jackpot screen and signs display which jackpot has been won. This celebration of the jackpot win is conducted in a traditional manner (i.e. flashing displays, jackpot alarms, music etc).

As the time between jackpot game awards is related to turnover, the number of jackpot games played by a player between feature games and hence their chance of winning is directly related to the size of each bet on each game played.

(1) All machines on the link have a feature game, be it a second screen animation game or a second set of reel strips.

(2) The link has a number of feature jackpot meters (up to 8). All feature jackpots may be linked.

(3) The feature game is activated as a function of machine turnover. This means that on average the feature game will occur one in, for example every \$5000.00. There are a number of advantages of activating the feature game on turnover. For example, it enables for the first time, a relatively simple mechanism for allowing mixed denomination on a link. The feature game gives the player the chance of winning one of the available feature jackpots if a certain outcome appears. For example, a new set of reel strips might appear with only 2 or 4 different symbols: Jackpot 1, Jackpot 2, or (Jackpot 1, Jackpot 2, Jackpot 3, Jackpot 4). The first time 5 of the same appear on the centre line the stated feature jackpot is won.

(4) Another advantage of using a random trigger for a feature game, is that it can be applied to any game.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

CLAIMS:

1. A random prize awarding system associated with a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to expected turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.
3. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and each feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.
5. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.
6. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a number in the set of numbers, the allotted number being proportional to the wager and in the event that the allotted number is greater than or equal to the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.
7. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined

range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a number in the set of numbers, the allotted number being inversely proportional to the wager and in the event that the allotted number is greater than or equal to the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

8. The system of claim 6 or 7, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

9. The system of claim 7 or 8, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

10. The system of claim 5, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

12. The system of claim 10 or 11, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

13. The system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

14. The system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

15. The system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of winning a major prize than in the main game.

16. The system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

17. The system as claimed in claim 14, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5, 6 or 16 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

18. The system as claimed in claim 16 or 17, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

19. The system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

20. The system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the system, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

21. The system as claimed in claim 20, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

22. The system as claimed in claim 20, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

23. A random prize awarding system associated with a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to the credits bet per game on the console.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

25. The system of claim 23 or 24, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

26. The system of claim 24, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

27. The system as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 26, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a

predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

29. The system of claim 27 or 28, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

30. The system of claim 27, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

32. The system of claim 30 or 31, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

33. The system as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 32, wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

34. The system as claimed in claim 33, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

35. The system as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 34, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of a major prize being won than in the main game.

36. The system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

37. The system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a

jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

38. The system as claimed in claim 36 or 37, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

5 39. The system as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 38, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

10 40. The system as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 39, wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the system, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a
15 jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

41. The system as claimed in claim 40, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

20 42. The system as claimed in claim 40, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

43. A gaming console including a random prize awarding feature, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition and including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition
25 occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console.

30 44. The system of claim 43, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

45. The gaming console of claim 43 or 44, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

46. The gaming console of claim 45, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

5 47. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 45 to 46, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted
10 to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

48. The gaming console of claim 47, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value
15 for that console.

49. The gaming console of claim 47 or 48, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

50. The system of claim 47, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between
20 successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

51. The system of claim 50, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

52. The system of claim 50 or 51, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on
25 the game.

53. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 52 wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

54. The gaming console as claimed in claim 53, wherein the gaming
30 console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

55. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 54, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the main game.

35 56. The gaming console as claimed in claim 55, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different

symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

57. The gaming console as claimed in claim 56, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

58. The gaming console as claimed in claim 56 or 57, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

59. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 58, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

60. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 59, wherein the console is arranged to be connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game is arranged to award a jackpot prize drawn from the jackpot pool.

61. A method of awarding a random prize on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when the game has achieved a trigger condition, the method including testing for the trigger condition and when the trigger condition occurs offering the feature outcome, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger condition on the respective console.

62. The system of claim 61, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

63. The method of claim 62, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

65. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 64, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

66. The method of claim 65, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

67. The method of claim 65 or 66, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

68. The system of claim 65, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

69. The system of claim 68, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

70. The system of claim 68 or 69, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

71. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 70, wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

72. The method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

73. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 72, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the main game.

74. The method as claimed in claim 73, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

75. The method as claimed in claim 74, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

5 76. The method as claimed in claim 74 or 75, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

77. The method as claimed in any one of claims 74 or 75, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

10 78. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 77, wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the system, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides
15 an incrementing jackpot pool, the method including increasing the jackpot pool in response to signals from the connected consoles and when the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawing the jackpot from the jackpot pool.

20 79. The method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

80. The method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

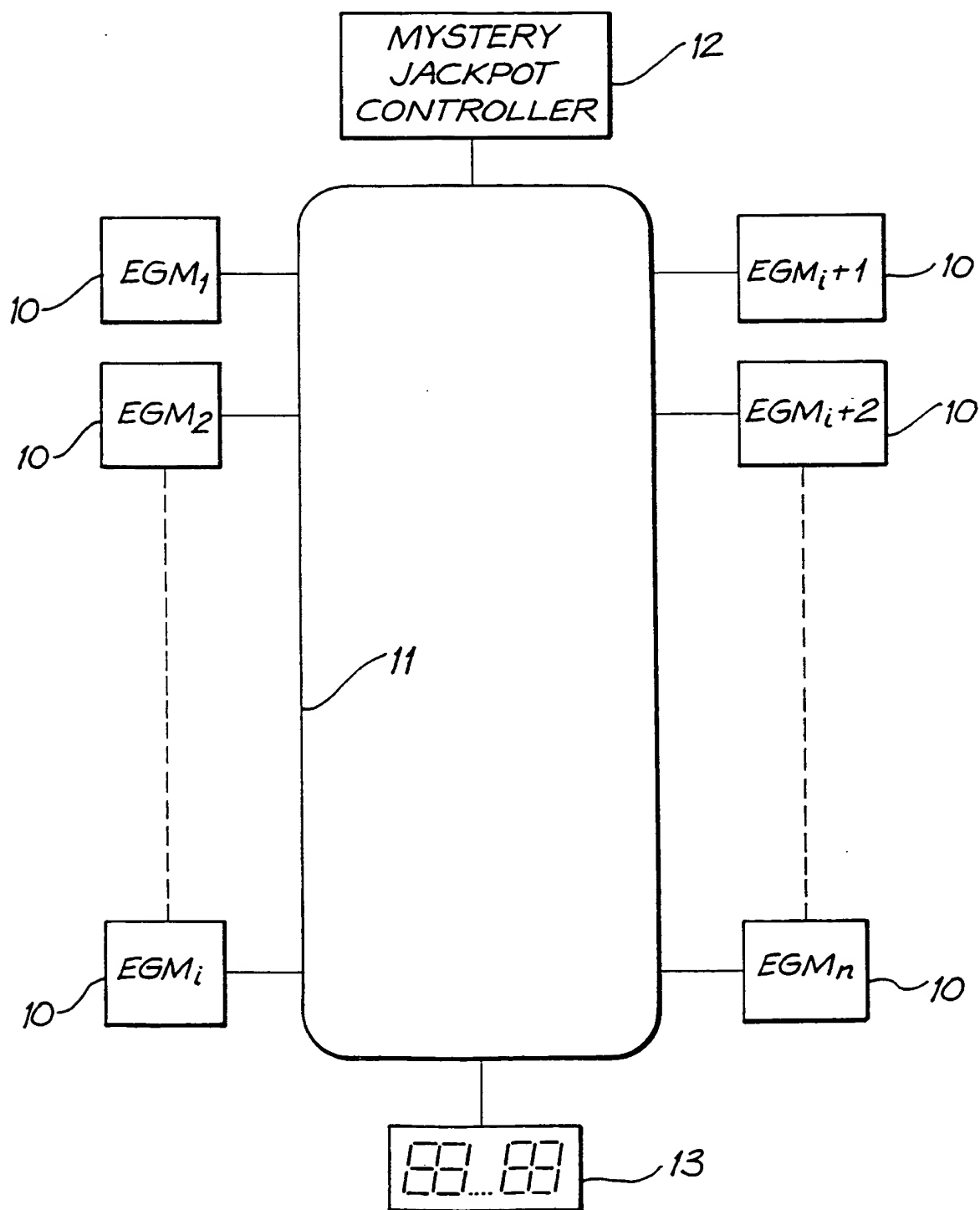


FIG. 1

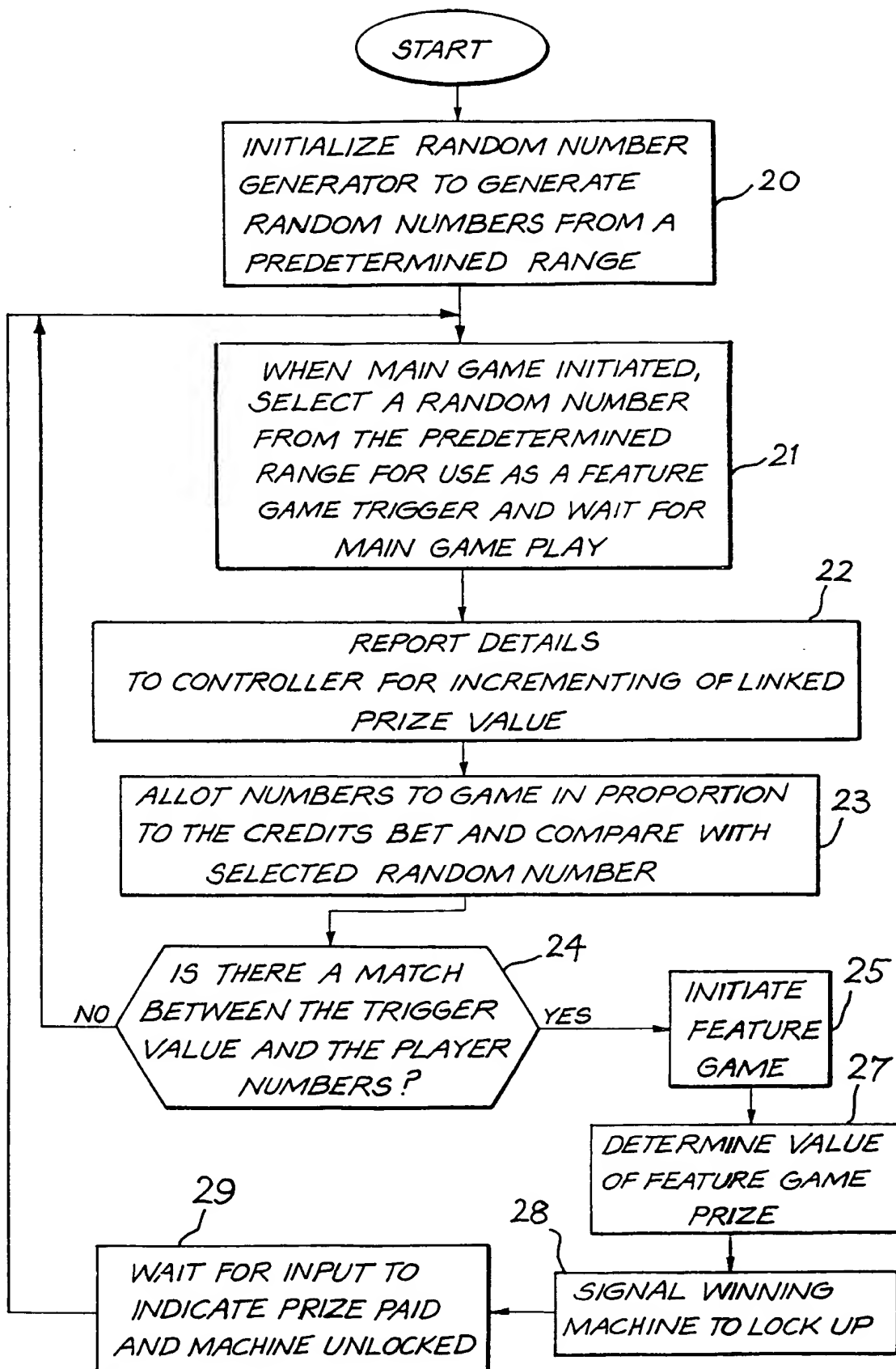


FIG. 2

| | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 20 | 11 | 11 | 3 | 7 |
| 12 | 10 | 18 | 13 | 22 |
| 9 | 12 | 13 | 24 | 9 |

Figure 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.
PCT/AU 98/00525

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|--|---|---|--|--|-----|---|-----|--|-----|--|-----|---|-----|--|-----|--|-----|---|-----|--|--|--|
| A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Int Cl ⁶ : G07F 17/34 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B. FIELDS SEARCHED | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC G07F 17/34 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched AU: IPC as above | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) WPAT/JAPIO: Trigger, touch off, set off, prize, award, payment, jackpot, payout, start. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | GB, 2153572 A (Arthur Edward Thomas Limited (United Kingdom)) 21 August 1985 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | AU, 53370/86 (589158) B (FRANKOVIC et al) 14 August 1986 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | AU, 33868/89 (628330) B (KABUSHIKI KAISA UNIVERSAL) 16 November 1989 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>"A"</td> <td>Document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</td> <td>"T"</td> <td>later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"E"</td> <td>earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</td> <td>"X"</td> <td>document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"L"</td> <td>document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</td> <td>"Y"</td> <td>document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"O"</td> <td>document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</td> <td>"&"</td> <td>document member of the same patent family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"P"</td> <td>document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | | | "A" | Document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance | "T" | later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention | "E" | earlier document but published on or after the international filing date | "X" | document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone | "L" | document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) | "Y" | document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art | "O" | document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means | "&" | document member of the same patent family | "P" | document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed | | |
| "A" | Document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance | "T" | later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| "E" | earlier document but published on or after the international filing date | "X" | document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| "L" | document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) | "Y" | document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| "O" | document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means | "&" | document member of the same patent family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| "P" | document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date of the actual completion of the international search 30 July 1998 | | Date of mailing of the international search report 11 AUG 1998 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200 WODEN ACT 2606 AUSTRALIA Facsimile No.: (02) 6285 3929 | | Authorized officer M.E. DIXON Telephone No.: (02) 6283 2194 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Information on patent family members

PCT/AU 98/00525

| Patent Document Cited in Search Report | | | | Patent Family Member | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------|----------------------|---------|----|---------|
| GB | 2153572 | EP | 148001 | | | | |
| AU | 33868/89 | EP | 342797 | JP | 1288289 | US | 4964638 |

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430 Rec'd PCT/PTO 11 JAN 2000

Second amendment

In this specification, the term "combinations" will be used to refer to the mathematical definition of a particular game. That is to say, the combinations of a game are the probabilities of each possible outcome for that game.

5 **Summary of the Invention**

According to a first aspect the present invention provides a random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means
10 arranged to test for a trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the console.

According to a second aspect, the present invention provides a random prize awarding system associated with a network of gaming consoles, the
15 system being arranged to offer a feature outcome on a particular console when a trigger condition occurs as a result of a game being played on the respective console the prize awarding system including trigger means arranged to test for a trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome on the respective console when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger
20 condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the respective console.

According to a third aspect, the present invention provides a gaming console including a random prize awarding feature to produce a feature outcome, the gaming console being arranged to offer the feature outcome
25 when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the console.

30 According to a fourth aspect, the present invention provides a method of awarding a random prize associated with a gaming console arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the method including testing for a trigger condition and initiating the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being

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determined by an event having a probability related to credits bet per game on the respective console.

5 According to a fifth aspect, the present invention provides a random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, each console being arranged to play a main game during which testing for the trigger condition occurs, and wherein
10 the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games, there being one or more gaming consoles associated with a gaming system, each of the gaming consoles being connected to a gaming network and including a signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a
15 central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles, and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

20 According to a sixth aspect, the present invention provides a gaming system providing a progressive jackpot feature, and including at least one gaming console having a random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, and including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature
25 outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the console being arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition occurs, and wherein the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games, the gaming console being connected to a gaming network and including a signal output means arranged to
30 produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that the progressive jackpot feature is implemented using a central feature jackpot system connected to the network to provide an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from each of the at least one connected consoles, and each feature game awards a jackpot drawn from
35 the jackpot pool.

Alternatively, the number range can be set to the average expected turnover between jackpot occurrences expressed in cents (500,000 in the above example), in which case the numbers allocated to the player, will be proportional to his total wager expressed in cents (i.e. 1-100 in the above example).

Preferably, the feature game is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the first game. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the second game is a pseudo-spinning-reel game having a reduced number of symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels a predetermined combination of symbols appears on the win line of each reel. In particular embodiments, 2, 3 or 4 symbols might be provided on each reel.

In one particular example, the second screen game is a five reel game with two different symbols on each reel, however, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 16 pseudo-reel games might be employed. The symbols may be of equal value and equally weighted (i.e. same number of instances) on each reel or alternatively, the prizes might be of different values (eg: different fractions of the pool) and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

Preferably, the prize awarded in a jackpot game by the system of the present invention, is a monetary amount the value of which is incremented with each game played on each gaming machine or console in the system. Alternatively, the incrementation can take place on a per token bet basis.

Where used above, the term 'console' is used to indicate a gaming machine, a gaming terminal or other device arranged to be connected to a communications system and to provide a user gaming interface. In the following description, examples are give which are applicable to traditional slot machines, however the invention should be taken to include gaming systems which include user interfaces other than traditional slot machines.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Embodiments of the invention will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a network of electronic gaming machines to which a mystery jackpot controller according to the present invention is connected;

Figure 2 is a flow chart showing a game arrangement according to the invention; and

Figure 3 shows an example of a 5 reel by 3 row window display.

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Second amendment

CLAIMS:

1. A random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console.
2. The prize awarding feature of claim 1, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to expected turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.
3. The prize awarding feature of claim 1 or 2, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games.
4. The prize awarding feature of claim 3, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and each feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.
5. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.
6. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a number in the set of numbers, the allotted number being proportional to the wager and in the event that the allotted number is greater than or equal to the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

7. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a number in the set of numbers, the allotted
5 number being inversely proportional to the wager and in the event that the allotted number is greater than or equal to the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.
8. The prize awarding feature of claim 6 or 7, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the
10 console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.
9. The prize awarding feature of claim 7 or 8, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.
10. The prize awarding feature of claim 5, wherein the predetermined
15 random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.
11. The prize awarding feature of claim 10, wherein the currency denomination is cents.
- 20 12. The prize awarding feature of claim 10 or 11, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.
13. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the
25 predetermined range to the game.
14. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 13, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.
15. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of the preceding
30 claims wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of winning a major prize than in the main game.
16. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 15, wherein the feature
35 game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

17. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 14, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5, 6 or 16 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

5 18. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 16 or 17, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

19. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

10 20. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with a gaming system, each of the gaming consoles being connected to a gaming network and including a signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature
15 jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

20 21. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 20, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

22. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 20, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

25 23. A random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition
30 being determined by an event having a probability related to the credits bet per game on the console.

24. The prize awarding feature of claim 23, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

35 25. The prize awarding feature of claim 23 or 24, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition

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will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

26. The prize awarding feature of claim 24, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a
5 jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

27. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 26, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the
10 predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

28. The prize awarding feature of claim 27, wherein the predetermined
15 random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

29. The prize awarding feature of claim 27 or 28, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

20 30. The prize awarding feature of claim 27, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

31. The prize awarding feature of claim 30, wherein the currency
25 denomination is cents.

32. The prize awarding feature of claim 30 or 31, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

33. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 32,
30 wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

34. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 33, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

35. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 34, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of a major prize being won than in the main game.

36. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 35, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

37. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 35, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5, 6 or 16 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

38. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 36 or 37, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

39. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 38, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

40. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 39, wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the system, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

41. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 40, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

42. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 40, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

43. A gaming console including a random prize awarding feature to produce a feature outcome, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition and including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average

turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console.

44. The gaming console of claim 43, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

45. The gaming console of claim 43 or 44, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

46. The gaming console of claim 45, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

47. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 45 to 46, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

48. The gaming console of claim 47, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

49. The gaming console of claim 47 or 48, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

50. The gaming console of claim 47, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

51. The gaming console of claim 50, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

52. The gaming console of claim 50 or 51, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

53. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 52 wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

54. The gaming console as claimed in claim 53, wherein the gaming
5 console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

55. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 54, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the main game.

10 56. The gaming console as claimed in claim 55, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

15 57. The gaming console as claimed in claim 56, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5, 6 or 16 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

58. The gaming console as claimed in claim 56 or 57, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

20 59. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 58, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

60. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 59, wherein the console is arranged to be connected to a gaming network and includes
25 signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game is arranged to award a jackpot prize drawn from the jackpot
30 pool.

61. A method of awarding a random prize on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when the game has achieved a trigger condition, the method including testing for the trigger condition and when the trigger condition occurs offering the feature
35 outcome, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a

probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger condition on the respective console.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

63. The method of claim 62, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

65. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 64, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

66. The method of claim 65, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

67. The method of claim 65 or 66, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

68. The method of claim 65, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

69. The method of claim 68, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

70. The method of claim 68 or 69, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

71. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 70, wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

72. The method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

73. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 72, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the main game.

74. The method as claimed in claim 73, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

75. The method as claimed in claim 74, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

76. The method as claimed in claim 74 or 75, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

77. The method as claimed in any one of claims 74 or 75, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

78. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 77, wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the method, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool, the method including increasing the jackpot pool in response to signals from the connected consoles and when the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawing the jackpot from the jackpot pool.

79. The method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

80. The method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the network.

81. A random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, each console being arranged to play a main game during which testing for the trigger condition occurs, and wherein the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games, there being one or more gaming consoles associated with a gaming system, each of the gaming consoles being connected to a gaming network and including a signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles, and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

82. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 81, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

83. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 81, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

84. The prize awarding feature of claim 81, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and each feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

85. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 81 to 84 wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of winning a major prize than in the main game.

86. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 85, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

87. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 85, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5, 6 or 16 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

88. The prize awarding feature as claimed in claim 85 or 86, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

89. The prize awarding feature as claimed in any one of claims 81 to 88 wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

90. A gaming system providing a progressive jackpot feature, and including at least one gaming console having a random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, and including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the console being arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition occurs, and wherein the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games, the gaming console being connected to a gaming network and including a signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that the progressive jackpot feature is implemented using a central feature jackpot system connected to the network to provide an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from each of the at least one connected consoles, and each feature game awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

91. The gaming system as claimed in claim 90, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

92. The gaming system as claimed in claim 91, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

93. The gaming system of claim 92, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and each feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

94. The gaming system as claimed in any one of claims 90 to 93 wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of winning a major prize than in the main game.

95. The gaming system as claimed in claim 94, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

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By facsimile
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430 Rec'd PCT/PTO 11 JAN 2000**Attention: M E Dixon****Our Ref: 80563**

29 April 1999

IP Australia - Patent Office
International Preliminary Examining Authority
PO Box 200
WODEN ACT 2606

Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd; Scott Olive
International Patent Application No PCT/AU98/00525
Entitled: "Slot machine game and system with improved jackpot
feature"

Dear Sir

DUE DATE FOR RESPONSE: 2 MAY 1999

In response to the Written Opinion dated 2 March 1999 the applicants hereby offer the following proposed amendments to overcome the clarity objection in the Opinion.

Amendment is proposed to the Summary of the Invention at page 5, and new claims pages 12 to 23 to replace the claims presently on file, under Article 34(2). Marked up pages, showing the location of amendments are also enclosed.

We request the authorised officer's reconsideration in view of the above submissions.

Yours respectfully
F B RICE & CO

clone

CHRIS OWENS

CO/lh/d20/pa1040
Encl

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430 Rec'd PCT/PTO 11 JAN 2000

CLAIMS:

1. A random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature outcome on system associated with a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console.
2. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 1, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to expected turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.
3. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 1 or 2, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of one or more feature games.
4. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 3, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and each feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.
5. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.
6. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a number in the set of numbers, the allotted number being proportional to the wager and in the event that the allotted number is greater than or equal to the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

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7. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a number in the set of numbers, the allotted number being inversely proportional to the wager and in the event that the
5 allotted number is greater than or equal to the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.
8. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 6 or 7, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average
10 turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.
9. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 7 or 8, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.
10. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 5, wherein the
15 predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.
11. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 10, wherein the currency denomination is cents.
- 20 12. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 10 or 11, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.
13. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers
25 within the predetermined range to the game.
14. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 13, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.
15. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of the
30 preceding claims wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of winning a major prize than in the main game.
16. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 15, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the
35 reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

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17. The prize awarding features~~system~~ as claimed in claim 14, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5, 6 or 16?? pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

5 18. The prize awarding features~~system~~ as claimed in claim 16 or 17, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

19. The prize awarding features~~system~~ as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

10 20. The prize awarding features~~system~~ as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the system, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system
15 connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

21. The prize awarding features~~system~~ as claimed in claim 20, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console
20 in the system.

22. The prize awarding features~~system~~ as claimed in claim 20, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

23. A random prize awarding feature to selectively provide a feature
25 outcome on ~~system associated with~~ a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer the feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition, the console including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a
30 probability related to the credits bet per game on the console.

24. The prize awarding features~~system~~ of claim 23, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

25. The prize awarding features~~system~~ of claim 23 or 24, wherein the
35 console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger

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condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

26. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 24, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

27. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 26, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

28. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 27, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

29. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 27 or 28, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

30. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 27, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

31. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 30, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

32. The prize awarding featuresystem of claim 30 or 31, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

33. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 32, wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

34. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 33, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

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35. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 34, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of a major prize being won than in the main game.

36. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 35, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

37. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 35, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

38. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 36 or 37, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

39. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 38, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

40. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in any one of claims 23 to 39, wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the system, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawn from the jackpot pool.

41. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 40, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

42. The prize awarding featuresystem as claimed in claim 40, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the system.

43. A gaming console including a random prize awarding feature to produce a feature outcome, the console being arranged to offer thea feature outcome when a game has achieved a trigger condition and including trigger means arranged to test for the trigger condition and to initiate the feature outcome when the trigger condition occurs, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a probability related to desired average

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turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger conditions on the console.

44. The gaming console~~system~~ of claim 43, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

45. The gaming console of claim 43 or 44, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

46. The gaming console of claim 45, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

47. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 45 to 46, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

48. The gaming console of claim 47, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

49. The gaming console of claim 47 or 48, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

50. The gaming console~~system~~ of claim 47, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

51. The gaming console~~system~~ of claim 50, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

52. The gaming console~~system~~ of claim 50 or 51, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

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53. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 52 wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

5 54. The gaming console as claimed in claim 53, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

55. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 54, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the main game.

10 56. The gaming console as claimed in claim 55, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

15 57. The gaming console as claimed in claim 56, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

58. The gaming console as claimed in claim 56 or 57, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

20 59. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 58, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

25 60. The gaming console as claimed in any one of claims 43 to 59, wherein the console is arranged to be connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool which increases in response to signals from the connected consoles and the feature jackpot game is arranged to award a jackpot prize drawn from the jackpot pool.

30 61. A method of awarding a random prize on a gaming console, the console being arranged to offer a feature outcome when the game has achieved a trigger condition, the method including testing for the trigger condition and when the trigger condition occurs offering the feature outcome, the trigger condition being determined by an event having a

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probability related to desired average turnover between successive occurrences of the trigger condition on the respective console.

62. The ~~method~~system of claim 61, wherein the trigger condition is determined by an event having a probability related both to turnover on the console and the credits bet on the respective game.

63. The method of claim 62, wherein the console is arranged to play a main game, during which testing for the trigger condition will occur, and the feature outcome initiated by the trigger condition is the awarding of a feature game.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein the main game is a standard game normally offered on the console and the feature game is a jackpot game associated with a special jackpot prize.

65. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 64, wherein the trigger condition is determined by selecting a random number from a predetermined range of numbers to be associated with each main game, and allotting to the game a set of numbers selected from the predetermined range of numbers, the size of the set of allotted numbers being related to the wager bet on the respective game, and in the event that one of the numbers allotted to the game matches the randomly selected number, indicating that the trigger condition has occurred.

66. The method of claim 65, wherein the predetermined random number range is related to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game divided by the credit value for that console.

67. The method of claim 65 or 66, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes a number for each credit bet on the game.

68. The ~~method~~system of claim 65, wherein the predetermined random number range is equal to the desired average turnover on the console between successive initiations of the feature game expressed as a currency denomination.

69. The ~~method~~system of claim 68, wherein the currency denomination is cents.

70. The ~~method~~system of claim 68 or 69, wherein the set of allotted numbers includes one number for each unit of the currency denomination wagered on the game.

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71. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 70, wherein the gaming console allots a block of numbers within the predetermined range to the game.

5 72. The method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the gaming console allots the block of numbers containing the lowest numbers in the predetermined range to the game.

73. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 72, wherein the feature outcome is a simplified game having a higher probability of success than the main game.

10 74. The method as claimed in claim 73, wherein the feature game provides a plurality of pseudo-reels with a restricted number of different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

15 75. The method as claimed in claim 74, wherein the feature game provides 3, 4, or 5 pseudo-reels with 2, 3 or 4 different symbols on each reel and a jackpot is activated if after spinning the reels the same symbol appears on a win line of each reel.

76. The method as claimed in claim 74 or 75, wherein the symbols are of equal value and equally weighted on each reel.

20 77. The method as claimed in any one of claims 74 or 75, wherein the prizes are of unequal value and the symbols have different weightings on at least one reel.

25 78. The method as claimed in any one of claims 61 to 77, wherein one or more gaming consoles are associated with the methodsystem, each of which is connected to a gaming network and includes signal output means arranged to produce an output signal in response to operation of the respective console, such that a central feature jackpot system connected to the network provides an incrementing jackpot pool, the method including increasing the jackpot pool in response to signals from the connected consoles and when
30 the feature jackpot game on each machine awards a jackpot drawing the jackpot from the jackpot pool.

79. The method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each game played on each gaming console in the system.

35 80. The method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the jackpot pool is incremented with each token bet on each game played on each gaming console in the networksystem.